

Air Quality Monitoring: Frequently Asked Questions

Is it legal?

Testing air quality is not illegal, and has been done in public venues all over the country. A scientific research protocol is followed, and the testing is done in a professional manner. One health care worker from one of our communities likened it to taking a water sample from a creek.

Why can't businesses have advance notice when the air quality testing will be done?

Testing has to be done during the normal course of business to accurately document the air quality. If venues or businesses have advance notice, you will not get test results that accurately reflect normal behavior.

What about testing in a small community and in businesses where everyone knows everyone?

Communities need to be assured that the purpose of the testing is to document a public health problem using research methods that have been used to measure air quality in communities all across the country. The end purpose of air quality testing is to document the problem, protect public health and promote the advancement of smoke-free policies.

What if the testers get caught?

We train the testers to be truthful about what they are doing. They are advised to test the quality of air at a time and place where members of the public likely gather. When selecting volunteers to be trained as testers, it is a good idea to choose people who look like the rest of the community so they do not stand out. The size of the air quality monitors makes it easy for them to go unnoticed in a purse or backpack.

When the test results are announced, will the businesses that were tested be named?

No. The final report will not reveal the names of venues where testing took place. In small communities, particularly for entertainment venues such as bingo halls or bowling alleys, additional information like size measurements is often omitted to protect the identity of the location.

Will the name of the organization that served as the fiscal agent for the testing be revealed?

Yes. UK operates under a policy of transparency when it comes to scientific research. We generally include the organization that funded the project in the final report. Under the Freedom of Information Act, such information would have to be provided if requested. Air quality test results are disseminated in a community to document the public health problem that exists and as part of an effort to educate the community and build demand for comprehensive protection and evaluate the effects of smoke-free laws on air pollution.

What does air quality monitoring cost?

The cost for the training the testers, use of the Sidepak machine, data analysis, final report, and technical assistance is \$2000 per community.

For more information, contact the Kentucky Center for Smoke-free Policy, University of Kentucky College of Nursing, 859-323-4587, www.kcsp.uky.edu.